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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ROMEO AND JULIET GALA RAISES \$10,000 FOR THEATRE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

HILLSBORO, OR – On July 16, 2009 more than 150 people gathered at the Tom Hughes Civic Center Plaza for a fundraising gala celebrating the opening of Bag&Baggage Productions' outdoor performance of William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Throughout the course of the evening, audience members enjoyed live music, dinner, wines from throughout the Willamette Valley and the opening performance of Hillsboro's first ever professional outdoor summer Shakespeare. Guests at the event donated more than \$10,000 to support Hillsboro's only professional theatre, and specifically the company's innovative TEN4ONE scholarship program.

Artistic Director Scott Palmer, a Hillsboro native and graduate of Hillsboro High School, was visibly moved by the number of donations from the audience, and said, "With your generous contributions, we are going to be able to provide a thousand students from Washington County with free tickets to see our performances next year."

TEN4ONE is a unique program that provides a free ticket to a Washington County high school student for every \$10 donated. Prior to the gala fundraiser, Bag&Baggage had raised nearly \$2,000 in donations and, combined with the donations from the gala, the company now has enough funds to support more than 1,000 free tickets for high school students in the county. Bag&Baggage will continue to raise funds for the program until August 15 and will then open the program to applications from any Washington County based High School.

Guests at the gala donated funds through a variety of games and activities, including a reverse silent auction and a paddle raise. "One of the unique fundraising ideas we had was giving someone in our audience the chance to select next summer's Shakespeare play. Audiences purchased a chance to select the show by donating \$50 and then we tossed a coin until we had a winner," Palmer said.

The winner was Alison Schrupp, Chief Operations Officer of Providence Health Plans (the health insurance arm of Providence Health Systems). Providence Health System was a major corporate sponsor of Bag&Baggage's first season at The Venetian Theatre and a number of Providence employees attended the gala. Schrupp was one of 35 people who purchased a chance to select

next summer's Shakespeare and, at the end of the evening, announced her selection: Shakespeare's delightful comedy of mistaken identities, *Twelfth Night*.

Maggie Chapin, Assistant Director and Education Officer for Bag&Baggage said, "There were about 15 plays on the list, and we were really hoping someone would pick a light-hearted comedy. Alison made the perfect choice as a follow-up to this year's *Romeo and Juliet* and we are already thinking ahead to costumes, set and style for next year's performance."

Romeo and Juliet continues at the Tom Hughes Civic Center plaza Thursday – Sunday until August 2, 2009. Tickets for the show, along with information about Bag&Baggage Productions and the TEN4ONE scholarship program can be found online at www.bagnbaggage.org.

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